
THE
A M O U R S
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P A R T II.

NOtwithstanding the licentious course of life I led, I did not neglect making friends to my self, and some of them were friends likewise to my pleasure ; but it was my character always to preserve them. An inclination for mistresses should be subordinate to the duties of friendship, and one ought to be more faithful in friendship than in love. When I was to judge of the character of a man, whom I had not

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time to study, I always inform'd myself if he had kept his old friends. Seldom does this rule deceive us. Of all I made, I never lost but one, and that was by an adventure, which, because of its singularity, it may not be amiss to relate.

Senecé was one of those for whom I had friendship only upon the account of pleasure. He was one of those characters, which every body has a sort of friendship for, but he had none for any body himself, for he knew not what it was. His heart was naturally upright, but his extreme indolence made him indifferent either about vice or virtue, either one with him or t'other depended upon his acquaintance; his own taste pushed him to nothing, but the taste of others made him give into every thing; it was as easy to make him go to a funeral, as a party of pleasure. He would assist and make one at every thing, but imagined or contrived nothing. His only
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difficulty was, how to conform himself to all our sentiments, which were often more different than our tastes. In short, Senecé was full of complaisance for all friends; but it was reserved for love alone to make a slave of him.

I observed, that he had not assisted at our pleasures for a year past, as he had used to do before. I spoke to him of it: he confessed to me, that he was violently in love with one of the most amiable and worthy women in the world. I had always suspected the commendations of lovers, and much more those of Senecé, who had never found fault with any thing. He proposed to introduce me to his mistress: He told me, he had spoke to her of me already, as of his particular friend, and that I should be perfectly well received. I accepted the offer and went with him that very day.

That master piece, whom he had ex-

alted so much, was a woman of about forty years of age, who had then some remains of beauty without having ever had any graces. But the chief of them was an air, a little more than bold, which raised and gave some life to a dead plaister of white paint, she had laid very thick on.

Madam Dornal, that was her name, gave me a complaisant reception, tho' she insinuated, that I ought to be sensible of the respect shewn me, by her preferring me to a great many others who desired to be admitted to her house, among the number of a select company who were constantly there every evening. I was a little flattered with this mark of distinction, and I did not neglect giving her the compliments she expected on it; but as I had no inclination to be obliged so far, went no more to her house, but when in a manner forced thither, by the importunity of Senecé. I very soon understood the character of Madam
Dornal

Dornal, and was sorry to see a gallant man so blind as to be in love with her.

Tho' Madam Dornal was a woman of no birth, and her husband a man obscure enough; one of her follies was, to give herself out for a woman of condition, and to speak of it as often, as all those do who are always troublesome, and full of their own merit and rank, but can never persuade others to believe it. The brilliant company, as she called them, that assembled at her house, were only five or six old gamestresses, and some tiresome stupid fellows who where indeed fit for no other conversation. As for the husband he was a poor weak man, whom they obliged to eat in private, when his presence would be troublesome. This then was no very amusing house. But supposing the company had been capable of alluring me, the mistress herself was sufficient to fright any man of understanding from it. She was a composition of falshood, envy and impertinence. She

had many lovers in her youth, and she had never loved any one of them ; her heart was too much formed for vice to be capable of any generous passion, and she would have been very dangerous, if she had wit sufficient to carry her bad intentions into execution ; but happily she had none at all, not but that she pretended to it. she endeavoured to appear lively, because she fancied that gave her an air of youth and spirit ; but the vivacity which comes not from the true source, and is only affected, adds to the foolishness of the character. I could not comprehend the blindness of Senecé, nor how he could be attached to a woman without youth, without beauty, and whose vanity and impudence would have made beauty itself ugly. I believed that it was the duty of friendship to open the eyes of my friend. Passion for an unworthy object makes a man the object of ridicule first, and ends by rendering him despicable. I was not ignorant that an attempt like
this

this was a tender point to a man in love, and I was a little troubled about it: that which determined me was, to see Senecé break insensibly with all his friends, and particularly with his family. One is not obliged always to have his relations for his friends; but it is decent to live with them as if they were so, and to conceal from the public all family dissensions. Senecé had a quarrel with his sister, who was a woman of reputation. It made a great noise, and every body blamed him; and I saw clearly that this scandal was the work of Madam Dornal. She knew very well the easiness of her lover, to make her afraid he might some time or other be persuaded to forsake her. So she had resolved to make sure of him; but as she was not young, the question was, how to do it. She began by making him forbear the company of all those whose remonstrances might defeat her projects. I had the honour to be as much suspected by her as any body else. She endeavoured all she could to break the bond of friend-

friendship betwixt Senecé and me ; but whether it was that she found him a little too much prejudiced in my favour, and that she was afraid of being guilty of an indiscretion against me, or, whether it was that she would have me, engaged in her interest : she made all advances imaginable, and used all possible means to please me. By so doing she added only to the contempt I had of her. I spoke of it to Senecé without any reserve. I represented to him the wrong he did himself. He had probably heard already, that people spoke to the disadvantage of his mistress ; for I no sooner entered on the subject but he interrupted me. I see said he, that you are prejudiced, as well as others, against Madam Dornal. Mayn't I be allowed to have a mistress ? and an't I very happy to make her my friend ? poor Madam Dornal is very unfortunate with all the noble sentiments she's endowed with, to have none but enemies. You are more unjust to her than any body, for she loves you, and
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I am a witness, that she has omitted nothing to please you.

I gave Senecé leave to say what he would, after which I made answer in these terms :

You know that with regard to morals I am an honest man and also too much a man of pleasure to be severe in matters of love. Can I find it amiss that you are in love? That were to upbraid one for being sick. Though your attachment appears to be ridiculous, one ought only to pity, and not blame you. Am not I, you say, very happy to find a friend in my mistress? Yes, without doubt; and is the height of happiness to enjoy with the same person both the pleasures of love and the sweetness and comfort of friendship; to find in her both the tender lover, and the sure friend. I would not wish for any other felicity; but unluckily for you, this is not the state you can pretend to with Madam Dornal. You love her,
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make her your mistress ; love is a blind movement, which does not always suppose merit in its object. One is only happy in opinion, and one his not at liberty when he disposes of his heart, nor can he well account for it ; but we are accountable for our friendship. Love makes itself felt, but friendship is inseparable from merit, and is always the fruit of esteem. Is Madam Dornal worthy of it ? then I described his mistress to him ; the picture was frightful, for it resembled her. A man, I said, is greatly to be pitied that's in love with the object of universal contempt ; but if one cannot disengage himself from so shameful an attachment, he ought at least to take care that it be not observed. But it seems you affect to be seen with her every where : you go together to the public theatres, though she can find no other company but those you engage either by interest or a forced complaisance. I am but the dupe of the interested civilities of your mistress ; perhaps she had no thoughts

thoughts of using me so well, till after she had in vain endeavoured to make you believe that I was not the man you took me for. I should have even been sorry, if her civilities had been sincere; her friendship would have been troublesome, and her esteem could have done me no honour. I thought it my duty to talk to you freely, and in strong terms on this subject. Besides as I am the only one of your old friends who goes to that house, I should be extreamly vexed to be suspected of approving of this your extraordinary attachment. It is your business to make your pleasures consistent with your other obligations; satisfy your desires, but let no woman tear you either from your family, or your friends. Senecé was a little stunned; he answered me, that if I knew her better, I should have other thoughts. In short, he seemed rather to be out of countenance, and perplexed, than convinced. The weakness of his character kept him from flying out into a passion against me, as the most part of lovers

lovers would have done ; but he did not appear to be a jot the more unfettered, or indiffernt about his mistress.

It was not proper for me to go to a woman's house of whom I had so bad an opinion ; I left off visiting ; I went not there, but when Senecé dragged me along with him. She complained at first of my being so great a stranger ; but probably he had given her an account of my motives, and of the conversation we had together on her score ; for all on a sudden she changed the civil, into the most spiteful manner of treatment, which was as sincere as her former civilities had been false. I was charmed with it, as it afforded me a pretence to quit her house entirely.

Nevertheless, I saw Senecé sometimes ; he was afraid to speak to me of his mistress, and I made not the least mention of her. From time to time I found him sad and thoughtful ; I truly loved him,
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and I was concerned for him. I asked him one day, what made him so pensive? the difficulty he had to answer made me suspect a part of the truth. After many excuses he confessed to me, that he had now and then quarrels with his mistress, and that she treated him haughtily, and even cruelly: that is, said I, because you are enslaved, and because that woman is not content to have a lover, unless she also become his tyrant; though at the same time she cannot reasonably expect he should love her any more. I would then have made him reflect on what I had said to him before. You can tell me nothing, said he interrupting me, but what I know, and have talked over with myself. I know as you and all the world does, the contempt she deserves; it's that which compleats my misfortune, I despise her, and I love her. In this case, I cannot but pity you, said I; but I should think it no hard matter to break an engagement, of which one is ashamed. That's not all, said he, I am afraid of her; she's a strange woman,

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and of such strong passions, as make her capable of the most violent resolutions. I had let her know one time that I was oppressed by her tyranny, and could no longer bear it, but would immediately return to my old liberty; she did not dissemble the matter with me but assured me that if I should forsake her, my infidelity should not go unpunished, and that she would poison me and herself too rather than not be revenged. Impertinence, said I, on her part, and ridiculous folly on yours; she is not so stout or so resolute, and does not believe that you are so cowardly. Pardon me replied Senecé, she has thoroughly observed my fears. You need no doubt, said I, but she is capable of the crime, since she is capable of seeing you again, and pardoning you for suspecting her of it. If any thing can secure you, it is her threatening; but the more easy way is never to see her again, and then you have nothing to fear. Senecé sighed and blushed, then said, I am disgraced and vilified to the
last

last degree. I confess that I still drag my chain, and I cannot hinder myself from looking sometimes upon her extravagant passions as only the effects of her love; I am persuaded that she loves me, and one ought to pardon all the faults committed on that score; her heart is only for me, and there is none living she would prefer to me. I believe, said I, that you may be very well assured of her constancy, without being suspected of having a great opinion of yourself, she must have a lover; she has found you by a singular fate. If she loses you, could she flatter herself with the hopes of a second miracle, to give her another lover a successor? this is the reason which attaches her to you, not as a loving mistress, for she is neither capable of loving, nor worthy of being loved; but she is a harpy, that's afraid of losing its prey. I am not much prejudiced in my own favour, yet in spite of her displeasure at me I am sure I could convert her rage against me into love, and supplant you merely for

the satisfaction of the novelty of the adventure. Senecé laughed at my rashness.

Our conversation had no other consequence; Senecé returned that very night to sup with Madam Dornal. What I had advanced but lightly to Senecé made me take the resolution to execute it in earnest, as the only way to undeceive and cure my friend. The difficulty was how to see Madam Dornal; chance gave me the opportunity. I saw her one day at the play in a box with Senecé, at the back part of which he concealed himself; for to do him justice, he was ashamed to be seen with her. I pretended to have seen nobody but him, and I went to him as if it had been to ask the favour of a seat. They were both confounded when I entered the box; I saw in the eyes of Dornal all the rage that the sight of a man she utterly hated could inspire, and which she could inspire, and which she could scarcely suppress but she could not hinder me from taking

taking the place I had asked, and which Senecé durst not refuse me; and as I was bent upon my design, I did not seem to take any notice of the bad grace with which it was granted me. During the comedy I did some civilities to Madam Dornal, which began to soften her. I became more and more polite to her by degrees. In short, whether she attributed my proceeding to the remorse I might have had for having displeased her, or whether it was that she loved rather to gain me, than to be at war with me; notwithstanding the friendship between Senecé and me, it ended in this, that she seemed to be pleased with the recounter and my politeness to her. I offered her my hand to conduct her to her coach; she accepted it, and asked me if I would not come and sup with them. I agreed to it, and Senecé seemed charmed with it. Supper passed very well, and I made Madam Dornal several compliments blended with raillery, to which she answered accordingly and we parted better

friends than ever we had been. I returned to her next day, and was still better received than the night before. I observed the same conduct for several days, and I omitted nothing to persuade her that I was in love with her. I went to her often while Senecé was absent, and and I saw that she concealed my visits from him. He told me that he lived in greater tranquillity with her than ever he had done, and that if she continued to treat him with so much good humour, he should be the happiest of all men. I easily understood the reason of the change but I took care not to tell it him, it was not yet time. In short, after Madam Dornal believed she had made a real impression on my heart, she ventured to speak to me with confidence. She complained and upbraided me with what I had said of her to Senecé, who it proved had had the weakness to tell her. I made good use of that explication she had favoured me with; I confessed to her, that I had said more than she

she had told me of; and I added, that jealousy had inspired me with these thoughts; pretending at the same time that it was no longer in my power to keep my secret, I told her blushing (and which I could do for more reasons than one) that I had loved her from the first moment I beheld her; that I could not support the happiness of Senecé; and that I had used my utmost efforts to disgust him and separate him from her, having no hopes of being able to supplant him any other way.

I observed that Madam Dornal swallowed greedily down the poison which I presented to her; her eyes became tender, she answered me, that she had been unjust to me; that she could not blame me; that love carried its excuse with it; that she would have preferred me to Senecé if she could have understood my intentions; that she had indeed sincerely loved Senecé, but that for some time past she had found that he little deserved it; and that she was sensible that an engagement,

gement, such as that of my heart, was very capable to determine her to abandon a lover who was so much my inferior. She pronounced these last words with a blush, which did not well become her. I fell at her feet, and made her understand by my thankfulness, that I was all devoted to her.

The preliminaries of an intrigue don't linger with a woman that is an adept in these affairs ; delays would have had an air of coldness and want of a proper assurance which the virtuous Madam Dornal would not have approved. In a few days our affairs were regulated, and it was resolved on, that we should fulfill our engagement, and that she should grant me the last favour the first night that Senecé should go to the court of Versailles.

It was pretty singular in Senecé, to be better pleased with his mistress since she had become indifferent about him, than he had been before : this was not what I had wished for, I wanted he should be jealous. I
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affected before him, but to no purpose, an air of familiarity between his mistress and me; we darted those looks at one another, which reveal so many secrets and betray so many lovers; but all this escaped the observation of my easy good-natured friend Senecé. One day he told me, he resolved to go next day to Versailles; I shunned going to sup with him that evening at Madam Dornal's. I did not doubt but she would acquaint me with his going, and I had a mind she should write to me: I was not mistaken; next morning I received a passionate love letter from her, and very plain, by which she gave me an assignation for the night following; she spoke of Senecé with contempt, and gave me assurances of the most violent love.

I went immediately to Senecé; I spoke to him about going to Versailles with an air of concern, so much the more to be suspected, as his going ought to have been to me a matter of indifference; I observed

observed he took notice of it. When I had brought him to the point I desired, I left him ; but in pulling out my handkerchief, I dropt on purpose Madam Dornal's letter ; I saw Senecé was ready to take it up, and he only waited till I was gone out to lay hold on't with the greater security. I did not doubt of the effects the letter would have upon him, and I prepared for my rendezvous, which I did not truly design to make the use of, the letter meant I should ; but I believed the only way of undeceiving my friend, was, to appear before his eyes to push the adventure to the last extremity.

I went to Madam Dornal's about midnight, with an affected mysterious air. Senecé, who had supped there, was just gone out, and in a chaise, as if a going to Versailles ; but at the end of the street alighted and returned on foot to a very small distance from the house, where I could see him watching. I did not

not seem to have perceived him, and I then entered.

I found the faithful Dornal in a very fine undress: she wanted nothing but youth and charms, and I — nothing but love. I had some reluctance at the part I was acting, but the motive encouraged me. I did not doubt but Senecé would follow me immediately. I was not mistaken. He entered in the moment after me, and in the very nick of time that madam Dornal embraced me with transport, and pressed to go to bed. Senecé heard her distinctly. Fury kept him for some time immoveable. Madam Dornal was extremely disconcerted, and I appeared to be so. At last Senecé looking at me, with eyes full of rage; 'tis thou, said he, traitor, that art the partner of the infidelity of that wretched woman: and at the same time attacked me sword in hand. I had nothing to do but to stand upon my guard, and parry the thrust he made; but the audacious
Dornal,

Dornal, who recovered her spirits in a moment, laid hold on him, and asked him, by what right he came to her house to commit such an abuse; and ordered him to be gone.

Nothing can equal the astonishment I was in at that impudence, and yet it increased when I saw the effect of her power over Senccé. These words, which ought to have raised his fury to the height, over awed and silenced him. She continued to treat him with the utmost insolence, and I saw him tremble before his tyrant.

When I saw there was nothing else to fear, I went out, and I waited in the street, to see the consequence of this adventure. I stayed more than an hour, but Senccé did not appear. I could not imagine what kept him, nor could I believe that the proceedings of Madam Dornal required so long an explication; so that, weary of waiting, I retired home.

Next

Next day I wrote to Senecé a circumstantial letter, in which I gave him an exact account of my conduct, and my motives: I received no answer. I learned some days after, that he continued to see his mistress. I did not conceive how she could have justified herself, nor that he could have been so weak as to pardon her. He has shunned me ever since. As for me, after I had caused to be made to him all the reasonable advances towards a friendly discussion, I gave over asking after him. I have been informed since, that Dornal's husband having died suddenly, Senecé had been so mean as to marry that vile creature. As my friend, I cannot but pity him, and be sorry when I think of his punishment.

I have learned by this adventure, that its impossible to reclaim a man that is so far gone, and deliver him from the yoke he has so stupidly submitted to; and that the tyranny of the most despicable woman is the most sure, as well as the most cruel.

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If the greatest pleasure of life be to pass it with a woman who justifies your taste by her good qualities and sentiments ; it must certainly be the greatest misfortune to be in a shameful slavery, subjected to the caprice of a woman who disunites friends and raises disturbances in families. Examples of this kind are but too common in Paris.

The intrigues, which I was engaged in upon my own account, hindered me from thinking any more on this adventure. I had then three mistresses all at once, And I must say, it requires a superior talent to preserve them ; that is to say, to deceive them all, and make every one of them believe she is the only mistress.

A woman need not have a great deal of sagacity to make her suspect she has rivals. If a lover has a multiplicity of duties on his hands, he must flag in the performance of some of them.

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One of my three mistresses was so excessively trifling and silly, that I soon became weary of her, and left her. She was such a one as had neither principles, passions, nor ideas; she did not think, but believed she did: her head and her heart were equally cold and barren. Those sort of women are only taken up with little objects, and speak in proverbs and common-place phrases, which they take for new strokes of wit. They refer every thing to themselves, as to some trifle that strikes them. They pretend to know every thing, and believe themselves necessary; bustling is their element; dress and decisions upon the mode are their occupation. They will interrupt the most serious and important conversation to tell you that the taffeties this year are frightful ugly, and of such a taste that they are a scandal to the nation. They take lovers as they do their gowns, because it is the custom or fashion: they are troublesome in business, and tiresome in pleasure. A lady of quality of this sort,

differs nothing from those of the inferior rank, but by the different objects she's employed about, and certain words and expressions more refined and modish. The lady will talk to you of a jaunt to Marly*, the other will fatigue you with a tedious story of a supper at a house in the Marais†. And how many men are also of this class, trifling fiddle-faddle fellows.

I had scarce left this one, when I was obliged to sacrifice another. Madam Derval (that was her name) was a good-natured woman, of a weak genius, but had an honest heart, and sincerity in her way and proceeding. It was as necessary for her to love as to breathe. The source of love was in her character, and did not spring from any particular object. She must have a lover, be who he would: her heart would not have been

* One of the king of France's houses.

† A corner of the town of Paris.

able to support the want of one ; but she could have had ten after one another, and, provided they had followed in the ordinary course, and intervals between she would scarce have perceived the change : she was faithful in her love to whosoever she had for the time, and had the same sentiments and fidelity to his successor. Madam Derval was always sure of a lover ; for she was a woman of a charming fine person, but the natural inconstancy of a successful lover made her often lose him ; so that he only left her to make way for another, whose good fortune was as sure, and his constancy as weak.

It was thought dull among the young fellows not to have had her so I thought of gratifying my fancy with her too. I reckoned it would be an affair only of some days ; but her good-nature, her complaisance, her caresses, her affections and her passion for me, engaged me to continue. I had taken her out of a

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whim,

whim, and I became attached to her by taste and inclination. I had already lived with her two months, without thinking of leaving her, when I received a letter conceived in these terms.

YOU prevented me, Sir when you took Madam Derval, for I had then the same design. I looked upon it as a mere caprice of yours, and therefore I resolved to wait till it should pass over, to satisfy mine. One would think two months might have exhausted your desires; but to continue on, looks like love and even fidelity. I was always in hopes that you would leave Madam Derval; I expected my turn, and in this confidence I have broke with a mistress that I kept. You are too polite a man to disturb the order of the society; restore to it, therefore, a woman that belongs to it. You must be sensible of the justice of my demand.

This letter seemed to be so singular, that I went immediately and communicated it to Madam Derval; but what
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was my surprize, when I saw by her obscure and ambiguous answers, that she was very indifferent about the matter! from that moment I perceived I had been in the wrong. I thought of making reparation, and that very day restored Madam Derval to the society, as effects belonging to the trade in common.

Tho' I had not lived in pleasure but with that which is called good company, I was too dissolute not to be known to the bad. One cannot be a man of the mode with impunity. It is sufficient to have entered into the world with that pretension, to acquire the character and really to be believed to be a man of the mode, when one deserves the name on't no more. A man is no sooner dignified with this distinguishing title, but he's run after by all the women who desire rather to be known than esteemed. It is not surely esteem, nor is it even love that determines them: It's an air, that makes them often run after a man whom they despise, though

though they prefer him to a lover, who has no other fault but that he's an honest man unknown.

One would think them sufficiently punished by the indiscretion, treachery, and all the ill treatment they suffer. Not at all ; as they have no honour, they cannot be dishonoured : they desire only to be upon the stage of the world : the noise which would make a discreet woman despair, and die, is their pride and satisfaction.

The girls who live by their charms, have the same ambition as the women of the world : the conquest of a man of distinction not only raises their price, but it also elevates them to a sort of rivalry with some women of condition, who resemble them too much : so that you may hear them talk with the utmost familiarity of ladies with whom they ought not to have the same acquaintances. Without regard to intrigue, I was sometimes at
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these suppers of liberty, where one goes to find ease and relief from that constraint the company of women of honour requires ; if one may treat them with an epithet so ill founded.

It was in these kind of parties of pleasure, that I knew the new beauties which misery, libertinism, and seduction furnished to the debauchery of Paris.

I confess, I never was of these parties but with a severe reluctance : these sad victims of our fancies and caprice set before me always the image of misfortune, and never that of pleasure.

I saw myself the object of the allurements of coquets, and of the not over-ambiguous declarations of several other women. Those kind of entertainments which had amused me for some time, became nauseous at length, and I found them ridiculous. I became sensible of the contempt which men of sense, and even those

those who loved pleasure, had for a man who was really a libertine : and I began to be ashamed of a title, which I had in common with very contemptible people. The idea of a more sedate life offered itself to my consideration. I thought it would be more consistent with my real sentiments, and I resolved to live with less noise and hurry. An adventure which happened to me at that time, determined me to yield to the inclination of my heart.

I had often letters sent me, such as persons know at Paris by their taste for pleasure, or by their estate, are accustomed to receive. The subject and stile of them are always the same. It is a young and lovely person, who bashfully declares the determined inclination she has for you, and offers you her favours at a reasonable price. I diverted myself with these billets ; it's all the answer they require, unless you accept of the proposal

fal. But I was one day exposed to a more seducing trial.

My valet de chambre came one morning to my apartment, and told me, that a woman in a mean habit had waited a long time till I should be awake, to speak to me about an affair, she said, which she could not communicate to any body but to myself. I ordered him to bring her in, and we where left alone together. I waited till she should let me know what she had to say ; but I never saw any body in such a confusion. All that misfortune, shame, misery, and virtue in distress, could inspire, was painted on her countenance. She opened her mouth several times, but speech failed her, and expired on her lips. Her condition affected me ; I endeavoured to encourage her ; and I let her know, I was not without compassion be the case what it would. After several efforts, and striving to hide her tears, which burst out, she said with a low and broken voice, that she was in the utmost misery ;

misery; that she had lost her husband, who supported her by the work of his hands; that she had been obliged to sell all that she had to pay some debts; that she had one daughter about sixteen years of age, which completed her misfortune, so great was their mutual affection, and the inability she was in to do any thing for her. The woman stopt there, and the tears which she had strove to suspend, ran down in greater abundance, and stifled her voice. I was exceedingly moved; her discourse, her condition, her countenance pierced me to the soul. Mean time I strove to conceal my trouble from her, the better to allay her's, and engage her to continue. I asked her, what she desired I should do for her: I am made to believe (she answered with a new trouble, and which seemed to increase every moment) that there are some gentlemen of good estates, who are so kind as to take care of girls, who have no other resource but charity; I come to beg your's. I know (she said still crying

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ing) to what kind of acknowledgment I engage my poor unfortunate daughter ; but I cannot resolve on seeing her die through down-right want. These last words cost her most, for it was with the greatest difficulty she could pronounce them. Shame made her look down, as it did me also. She was ashamed of a discourse so humbling for herself, and which being so shocking to nature, she certainly thought offensive to me. I saw through all her soul, and her sentiments pierced my heart ; I endeavoured to comfort her, and as I was a little troubled myself, I gave her what money I had about me, and let her go to breathe and recover herself with more freedom. Ah ! but misfortune makes people grateful ! I had all the pain in the world to get loose from her acknowledgments. When she was gone, I made some reflections upon her condition, and upon the struggling she must have had in her heart before she made this step ; which naturally led me to

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another

another reflection, viz. how much our virtue depends upon our situation.

I lived that day as I was wont to do, that is to say, I passed it with the same company, and in the same pleasures; but my thoughts were quite otherwise employed; the impression, which that unfortunate woman had made upon my soul, troubled me. I retired, and carried home with me the image of misery and grief.

Next morning I was told the same person waited, and wanted to speak with me. I knew not what could have brought her again: I ordered she should be admitted; she entered, and a young girl following her, who was her daughter, as she had told me. I was then a bed. They approached. The mother thanked me again in a most humble manner, for what I had given her the day before. The daughter, who kept silence, accompanied the discourse of her mother with

with a modest and most submissive air. I had time to examine her. I had never seen any thing so lovely; the surprize I was in kept me from desiring the mother to say no more on that subject. I let her speak on, without minding what she said to me, so much was I struck with the beauty of her daughter. Candour, virtue, and innocence shone out in her countenance. One does not see such faces in the great world. The most regular and charming features lost nothing of their splendor, notwithstanding her dejection and paleness, which naturally might have darkened them. She had not strength enough to stand; she dared not to look at me, and did not breathe but by sighing deeply. I bid her draw near, she did it trembling; she seemed to be in a great fright. Why are you afraid, said I, miss? Has any new misfortune happened to you? For what reason came you here? To pay our respects, and give you thanks, answered she, hesitating. I did no more,

answered I, than common humanity required of me, but there must be something else that afflicts you, speak without fear; I ask no other acknowledgment, but that you let me know your farther wants. Instead of answering me, she looked on her mother and fell a crying. The mother could not restrain her tears, she took her daughter in her arms; they embraced one another, and clasped as closely as if they had been afraid they were to be separated for ever. I did not know what to think of so immoderate a grief; I thought at length I had hit upon the reason of it. Are you afraid, said I to them, that I would dare to abuse your misfortune? Is not that the imagination which is the cause of your fear, and which is injurious to me? Alas! Sir, said the mother, I thought myself obliged to bring Julia along with me to thank our benefactor. We durst not, neither of us, think of any other motive, but — I interrupted her that moment; her confusion made me
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me understand her idea too well; I thought that I ought, out of regard to the misfortune of the mother, and the modesty of the girl, as also for my own sake, save them the trouble of a more particular explanation. Don't speak any more of the small assistance I have given you, said I, you owe no thanks for it, and I offer you all the help that your necessity requires: therefore let your thoughts be more comfortable for yourselves, more acceptable to me, and less injurious to us all three. Whilst I was speaking, I saw a certain serenity spread over their countenances, especially the girl's, whom I considered with the greater attention and freedom, when my presence made her no more ashamed, though she seemed to be in as great agitation, but not so painful nor humbling. They threw themselves both upon their knees at my bed-side; their tears flowed apace, but the reason for them was changed. They spoke both together, and they confounded one another

in their returns of thanks; their hearts did not seem sufficient for their joy; they burst out, but could not express it. Their discourse was without order; they could not be understood, but by their transports. What, said they, Heaven gives us a benefactor, whose pure generosity!—Great God, how happy are we?—What favours!—They took me by the hands; Julia squeezed, and wet them with her tears. Thankfulness and virtue made her give me caresses, which her modesty would have been frightened at, if I had dared to venture on them. Innocence in some cases is more bold than vice is enterprising.

I was melted down at this sight; I could scarce keep from crying. I made them rise, and obliged them to sit down. At last I desired they might hold, and be silent; I saw that violence was done to their gratitude in obeying me.

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I could not enough admire the beauty of Julia. Notwithstanding, I avow, that her charming person did not inspire me with the least desire that could hurt her virtue. A sentiment of respect for her misfortune, and for her virtue, had shut my heart against all other thoughts whatsoever.

I asked them to tell me their situation. They told me in particular what the mother had said before; that her husband had an employment which found them subsistence, and which was all their fortune, and that had it not been for his sudden death, Julia was to have been married to a young man who loved her, and whom she loved. Julia blushed, and her mother ran out in commendation of him to me; but Julia surpassed her with so great vivacity, that I thought the mother had only depreciated, instead of praising and recommending him. I asked them if the young man was still of the same mind, and if their circumstances.

stances had not wrought a change in his heart. Oh, my God, no, said Julia. His kindness and behaviour since my father's death, deserves all my love and esteem, as it is a proof of his. He has shared with us the incomes of the small trade he has, said the mother; but I perceived that he hurt himself extreamly without being able to afford us what was necessary, when he deprived himself of it: this is what made us to have recourse to your charity.

I told them to bring him to me next day, and I let them go; but I enjoined them silence with regard to the thanks, which they were always ready to renew.

I was more restless in my mind that day than I had been the day before. I was constantly reflecting on the beauty of Julia; I thought she loved, and it was natural and just she should be loved; that love was begotten by inclination, fortified

fortified by acquaintance, and possibly by misfortune ; which unites more and more those who truly love. The kind and humane actions of the young man must also attach his mistress by the ties of gratitude ; his services were superior to all those I could do them. They cost me very little, and he had sacrificed to them his very necessities. Oh ! but that lover appeared to me to be happy ! These ideas occupied me constantly. I observed it, I was sorry for it, or at least disturbed. I was afraid lest some amorous or jealous sentiment should slip into my heart, but I soon fortified and secured it. I found that those sentiments which Julia had inspired me with, though tender, were of a very different nature from love.

Whether it was from virtue, or self-love, I had only shown humanity, I would also be generous : I resolved to show a particular regard to two faithful lovers, to join them together, and to partake

partake of their happiness, by the pleasure of procuring it, and securing their fortune and state of life.

One never does a virtuous action without a reward. I had no sooner formed this design, than I felt in my soul a satisfaction which ordinary pleasures never give.

Julia did not fail to come next day with her mother, to introduce and shew me her lover; he was well made, and appeared to be about 22 years of age. As Julia had let him know that I only desired to see him, that I might do him service, he saluted me with that kind of timidity, which is observed in every honest man, who has either a favour to ask or receive. I asked him what employment he was of; he satisfied me fully; and did not conceive by the account he gave me, that he had wherewithal to subsist himself, much less to support others. Nothing but the most perfect

perfect love could find any thing to spare in so hard and streight a necessity. Whilst he was speaking, I took notice that Julia never turned her eyes from him, but to look at me. Hope and fear were painted in her face. She trembled, lest he should not please me, and sought to read in my eyes the impression he made upon me. In short, I had no sooner assured the young man, that I was well satisfied with both his person and discourse, but I saw joy in the countenance of that unhappy maid. I asked them, if they were still resolved to marry? The young man made answer; my happiness, said he, would certainly depend on my being joined with Julia, if I could make her happy; if I had worlds, she should be mistress of them; but as I have nothing, I should never forgive myself, if I made her partaker of my unhappy fate. If that fear, said I to them both, be the only obstacle to your marriage, I charge myself with the making of your fortune.

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I had no sooner said this, than Julia renewed her thanks in the most lively and expressive manner she could, for my goodness to her mother and her; but the offers of kindness I had made her lover, seemed to touch her most, for which she exceeded in her thankful acknowledgments. He told me, that he had so great a sense of my goodness, that it would yet be the more dear to him, if he might be allowed to devote himself to my service for ever; that he would do all that he was capable of to acquit himself of his duty, and shew his gratitude. They all three made the same protestations. I considered of it, and took my measures according to the offers they made me. The greatest part of my estate was in Brittany, where I have considerable lands. My way of life at Paris gave me no time to look after my affairs my self, and those I had charged with the care of them in the province acquitted themselves of them but very ill. I asked them if they
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should like to live in the country, in some part of the estate that belonged to me, and I would give them a good settlement, and they should take care of my affairs.

The young man assured me, that the place in the world the most happy for him, would be that where he could live with Julia, and that he would prefer being attached to me and my service to all other business whatsoever. Julia and her mother assured me their sentiments were the same. A few days after, Julia and her lover were married: I was at the expence of the wedding, and present at it. I procured for them a pretty considerable employment; the duty of which they might discharge without neglecting my affairs, and I made them depart for Brittany. Nothing ever gave me so much the image of perfect happiness as the union and transports of these young lovers: they seemed all love, without the mixture of

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any other passion but that of gratitude towards me, which they both strove with emulation to exceed in. I never in my life had a pleasure so pure, as that that which I had in making them happy. The author of a benefit reaps the greatest fruit of it himself. Their happy state seemed to reflect satisfaction upon me. All the pleasures of the senses don't come up to that which I felt within me. There must certainly be in the heart a peculiar sense of feeling, and superior to all others.

I have had no reason to repent of having trusted them with my affairs; but I owe them a more sensible and real obligation.

I partly owe to them the change which from that time happened in my sentiments. Their state made me wish for such another. I found there was a void in my heart, which all my false pleasures could not fill up. The tumults
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of a disorderly life, instead of satisfying me, made me giddy; and I felt that I could not be happy, unless my heart was compleatly filled. The idea of a virtuous tranquillity rendered all my former pleasures odious; and to deliver myself from the importunity of my old partakers of them, I resolved to pass some time in the country with one of my friends, who had invited me to his country-house, some leagues from Paris.

There I found the countess of Selve. She was about twenty-three, and had been a widow two years. She had been sacrificed to family interest, when she was married to the count of Selve. He was a man in years, of a harsh and jealous temper: as he knew he was not lovely, spite made him the more insupportable. The young countess, notwithstanding her reluctancy to the match, did every thing that virtue could require of her. She could not give her heart, but she did all her duty, and her

conduct made her respected without rendering her more happy.

I scarce knew her, for she lived very retire, and when by chance I have met with her, her serious air and character had awed me. The women with whom I commonly lived had no manner of likeness with Madam de Selve, who appeared always to be a woman of too great merit and virtue for me to entertain any hopes of gaining. When I met with her at my friend's house, I was in a disposition very different from my old way, and I saw her with more favourable views. Her conversation, and the intercourse which is more familiar in the country, made me know her better, and always to her advantage. As she had never had any great love for her husband, she supported her widowhood with more decency than affliction, and nothing hindered her character from appearing in a very amiable light

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The countess of Selve had more good sense than wit (since they distinguish between one and t'other;) or rather, her spirit and thoughts were more just than sparkling: her discourse had none of those excursions and flights which surprize and dazzle at first, but soon after vanish and are tiresome. One was never struck nor astonished at what she said, but it was always approved of.

She was esteemed by all women who were themselves worthy of esteem, and respected even by those who were not. Her person inspired love, her character was proper for friendship, and her reputation supposed virtue. In short, the finest soul united with the finest body, was the countess of Selve. I soon perceived all her perfections, but I felt them more; I became enamoured without knowing I was so; and I loved her with passion, when I believed I only respected her.

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But it was not long before I understood my sentiments. I had been but a few days in this house with the countess, when she gave orders to make ready her equipage to return to Paris. This order afflicted me, without knowing why; but I soon found the true reason of it: I had too much experience of my heart to be ignorant of the state of it. I found then, that I loved more truly than ever I had done. I was extreamly troubled to let the countess go without informing her of my passion. Happily for me, the master of the house prevailed with her to stay two days longer. I resolved to take the advantage of them, and declare myself before she went: I never found myself so much put to it in any situation. I, who was so well acquainted with the sex, and who had been free with them even to indecency, durst not, scarcely, open my mouth with the countess. Let not the women complain of the men; they are only what they have made them. I had several opportunities

tunities of explaining myself to Madam de Selve; but respect made me always keep silence. In short, not being able to get the better of my timidity, I resolved to let her know my sentiments by my conduct, without daring to declare them. I contented myself with asking leave to go and pay my respects to her. My proposition seemed to trouble her a little, and instead of answering me precisely, she said, that her house would not be much to my taste; that the restraint she lived in, would not be very agreeable to one, who was so much a man of pleasure. This answer was so like a refusal, that I would not press her to explain herself more clearly, but resolved to interpret it as a permission. I did not answer her at that time, but in a general and polite manner; which would say every thing, and says nothing. Madam de Selve parted next day; I did not stay long after her, and I was no sooner at Paris, than I went to see her. She seemed to be surprized, but she received

ceived me with politeness. My first visit was short; I made several others after the same manner; I was afraid of being troublesome, before I had any title to go freely to her; my visits became more and more frequent: in a little time I went to no other house but Madam de Selve's; every other place displeased me: my friends, that is to say, my ordinary acquaintances, believed I was stolen from them; and quarrelled with me for desertion, when they met me, but without using violence to make me return to their society. This is the conveniency among those sort of friends who are only attached to one another by their pleasures: they have more vivacity and kindness when they meet, than anxiety to seek out and be with one another. They take up with one another without choice: they lose, without forsaking one another: they are pleased to see one another, without ever desiring it; and they perfectly forget one another when absent.

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I had therefore the happiness of seeing Madam de Selve without disturbance. As she was very much alone, I could have easily found the opportunity of opening my breast to her ; but whether it was that the occasion offering itself so easily hindered me from precipitating matters, when I was always sure of having it again in my power, or that it was the esteem and respect which she had inspired me with at first, which overawed me, but I durst not venture upon a declaration. I had made declarations to women, with whom I was not in love; yet when I was really in love, I had not the courage to do it. But though I did not tell Madam de Selve that I loved her, I showed it by all my conduct; and I perceived that my sentiments did not escape her observation. A woman is never offended at being loved; but a declaration may displease, because it requires a return, and supposes always the hopes of obtaining it. I imagined, that the surest way to succeed, was to
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endeavour to make myself master of her heart, before I should dare to ask it. It was already more than a month, that I visited Madam de Selve in this manner with the greatest assiduity, and I should perhaps have gone on in the same way much longer, if she herself had not given me the occasion of declaring myself.

She told me one day, that she was surprized how such a rambler as I could stay so long as I did in so retired a house, and so little amusing as her's was. That ought to make you see, Madam, said I, that rambling is not so much a sign of pleasure, as the restlessness of a man who is in search of pleasure without finding it; and since I am allowed the honour of paying my respects to you, I wish for no other pleasure. I did not look for a compliment, answered Madam de Selve, but I only wondered, if you was really so great a libertine as you have been called, that
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you was so prodigiously changed It is to you, Madam, said I, that I owe so singular a change; 'tis you that have taken me off from all my vain pursuits and pleasures; 'tis with you, that I find the most affecting and purest pleasures I ever had in my life: too happy if one day you would vouchsafe to share them with me. Madam de Selve would have interrupted me; I did not give her time: I had ever till that moment kept a constrained silence. I had no sooner broke it, than I found myself eased of a most heavy burthen, and I continued with greater vivacity. Yes, Madam, I feel myself bound to you for life, and that every thing would be insupportable to me without you, and that you are instead of all to me. Hitherto I have been plunged in pleasures, without having truly known what love was; 'tis love that enlightens me, and you only can inspire it. I will not relate here all I said to Madam de Selve; but I ended by assuring her of a most sincere

sincere and ardent love, and of unalterable constancy.

I had no sooner eased my mind by this declaration, than I was afraid of her answer. Madam de Selve gave me no sign of her being either angry, or well pleased; but she answered me sedately; the custom, said she, Sir, which you have had to give yourself up to the first motion and desire you feel for the women you see, makes you believe that you are in love; it may be also, you imagine, that these kind of discourses ought to be addressed to all women, and that it is one of the duties of you men of gallantry. Be that as it will, and without suspecting your sincerity, if you have any inclination for me, I advise you not to give way to it; you could not be happy in loving alone, and I would not run the risque of making myself unhappy by answering your love. Ah! what misfortunes, said I, do you apprehend from sharing the sentiments of love with a man of honour who would
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love you only? The greatest, she answered, which could happen to a woman of any delicacy. The man of honour, or such a one as is taken so to be, is often very far from being a perfect lover; and the man of the most strict probity in other things is not always without reproach in the affairs of love: and how melancholy a thing is it when a woman shall find herself reduced to fight in secret, because she is the only person who has reason to complain: her lover is without blame in the world's eye, guilty to her alone! Madam de Selve perceiving that I was going to interrupt her; it is to no purpose, added she, to enter into a farther discussion on this subject, nor to endeavour to extirpate the ideas I have of the dangers, to which I could not resolve to expose myself to, though I should even have to fight against my own heart, which, happily for me, is free and undisturbed: nevertheless, as I have no reason to complain of you, and that your character appears

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to me worthy of esteem, I willingly offer you my friendship, and I shall be more satisfied with yours, than with so blind a passion as love.

I was so struck with the wisdom of this discourse, that it raised my esteem of Madam de Selve yet higher, and consequently my love. When this passion has once truly entered into the heart, the soul receives no ideas but such as serve to heighten and render it more strong. I was glad that I had made my declaration, and thought I ought to content myself at first with the offer which Madam de Selve made me in return to it. It was only friendship indeed, but the friendship of a lovely young woman, as it inspires tender and delicate sentiments, must itself end in love, if the object of it has merit, and don't render himself unworthy of it by indiscretion.

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I durst not dispute Madam de Selve's reasons: when one conceives them so well as she had done, one can easily defend them, and contradiction may only confirm the opinion: but I proposed to myself to bring the subject into conversation afterwards. A woman who talks often of the dangers of love, hardens herself against the hazard, and familiarizes with the risque and the passion together. It rarely happens that one speaks always of love, and is never touched with it.

I did not fail going to Madam de Selve every day; my visits could not be more frequent, but they were also more long than formerly. I bestowed all my time there, without daring to ask a reward. I spoke to her of my passion. The confession I had made of it, authorised me. I told her, that her aversion to the sentiments I had endeavoured to inspire her with could not change mine; and since I could pretend

only to her friendship, I conjured her, that it might be the most tender. She assured me it should, and I then took the liberty to kiss her hand. The caresses of friendship I thought might warm the heart, and make love spring out. Seduced by the pretence of a pure attachment, Madam de Selve resisted weakly. I accustomed her insensibly to hear me speak of my passion, and I waited till time and my constancy should excite that disposition I wished for, or rather that I might obtain a confession; for I perceived that I made every day some new progress in her heart. Love, which is not repulsed at first, becomes very soon prevailing.

I passed three months with her in this manner. I was astonished at my constancy; never had any other woman cost me so much time, neither in making me happy, nor holding out against me. As it was the senses only that attached me to women formerly, success cooled

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me very soon, and severity repulsed me ; but love and esteem had fixed me with Madam de Selve. My business and desire was only to please her ; she appeared to me to be sensible of it, and I believed I wanted no more than to procure that confession, which establishes the pretensions of a lover more than all the other marks of goodness he receives.

Madam de Selve confessed to me, that though my character had frightened her at first, she was perfectly pleased with my behaviour afterward ; and that I should have been the only man for whom she would have had any inclination, if she had not been upon her guard against love. I introduced these conversations frequently. I would sometimes speak to her of the count de Selve her husband, that I might make her see the difference there is between giving in to the passion of an obsequious lover, and being a slave to the oddities of a dis-

agreeable husband. Madam de Selve agreed with me honestly, that she never loved her husband; that the disproportion between their age and humours did not allow it; but it was with difficulty that she confessed that she had not been perfectly happy; and as I insisted on the troubles she had had from the jealousy of the count de Selve, she answered me simply, that a woman of prudence ought never to make a noise upon that account; that it belonged to her to cure his jealousy by her conduct, and also to pardon it for love's sake, which is the source of it. In short, Madam de Selve never spoke one word by which the memory of her husband could be injured. All that she said concerning herself, with respect to me, increased my love. I was almost sure, that the friendship she said she had for me was no more than a pretence to cover the love that I had been so lucky as to inspire her with. At length I adventured on the obtaining a confession. One day

day, when by her discourse and confidence, she gave me the most tender signs of it : pardon me, said I, Madam, my rashness : I can no longer doubt, that you have sentiments for me more lively than those of friendship : confess it to me, it will only serve to make me your's the more inviolably. Madam de Selve seemed quite stunned, and sighed instead of answering me. I would not give her time to recover herself, I thought I ought to make use of the happy minute. I pressed her again, I threw myself at her feet, and made the strongest protestations. I fear, said she, I have let you know my sentiments more by my conduct than by all the words you could have required, or I have given you. I don't desire to hide my soul from you ; I I felt the most tender concern for you before I was well aware of it. I am no more in a condition to thwart the inclination which has carried me along, and perhaps I should never have strength nor will to do it. You see how far my
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confidence in you has gone, may you never make me repent of it. I was so charmed to hear that which I had so ardently wished for, that I burst out with the greatest transports of acknowledgment. I encouraged her with regard to her fears, I swore to her an everlasting constancy. I was free to dispose of my hand, I offered it to her as a pledge of my sincerity. It is neither oaths nor laws, said she, that could answer to me for your fidelity. I would not have my happiness in being bound to you depend upon ties that are indissoluble, only because they are forced; nothing but your heart can satisfy me. I don't in the mean time refuse the offer you make me; our conditions are suitable, and I would willingly contrive new bonds to unite us yet more strictly together. But though I am mistress of my person, I am not of age to dispose freely of my hand. Those to whom the law gives still some authority over me upon this account, have other interested

terested views, which, perhaps, might give us some trouble. I can assure you I will render their designs ineffectual; but we must delay, as yet, for some time. It is neither fit for you, nor me, to come under any engagements in the face of the world, but such as are absolutely free from all obstacles and objections. Till then I shall have time to put your heart to the trial, which will only make our union so much the more charming.

I approved of Madam de Selve's resolution, and agreed to every thing she proposed, and had a mind for. How great soever my desires were to enjoy her, I had no will but her's. I lived with her in this hope, and though I was still wanting and desiring, I was in the most happy situation I ever knew in my life.

With Madam de Selve I had all the pleasures of a pure love, which is the
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happiest state of lovers. This kind of life was very new to me ; I was used to less esteem, and more liberty. I would sometimes try to make Madam de Selve approve of my old customs with the women. I told her, that when a lover had made a present of his heart, he ought not to be refused favours of less value, though the pleasure they give be more indulging to the senses. I offered her my reasons under all the forms imaginable, and I related to her the maxims, and all the common topics, I had with success made use of formerly with the women. These sort of arguments had no weight with Madam de Selve, whose conduct did not arise from the same principles with those women's, whose company I had kept.

She would answer me without being moved, and sometimes even in the jocular way. She would tell me, that that custom of making a step without, or contrary to rule, and exposing themselves

selves to the pleasures of men, was decisive with regard to the fate and honour of women, however frivolous it might appear to me; that her heart was as favourable to me, as the rules of her conduct, by men called prejudices, were against me; and yet men themselves, said she, seem to approve of those prejudices, since we don't see them continue to be attached to a woman after she has sacrificed them to love. I was forced to approve of the reasons which displeased me infinitely; it behoved me to submit to the ideas of Madam de Selve, since I could not make her adapt mine, which without doubt were not the justest. Lovers would be very happy, if there were continual obstacles set in the way of their desires; it is no less essential to your happiness to preserve and keep up desires, than to satisfy them.

We lived in the most delightful harmony, and when the noise of war alarmed

ed us, I was obliged to think of joining my regiment. I well knew what it would cost me to be separated from Madam de Selve; but nothing could equal the pain which this news gave her. Whilst I was preparing for going, I durst not speak of it to her, for fear of afflicting her more, but I could not hinder myself from appearing concerned. She observed it, and said, that her state was very different from mine; that I had nothing but the ordinary troubles of absence; but that she was going to be continually under the most cruel alarms. She said no more; but her silence and her tears told me more than she could have been able to speak. I never saw deeper sorrow; I was pierced with it. After having in vain tried to comfort her, I retired, to be at freedom to give myself over to my own trouble. I reflected upon that chimerical honour, to which I was sacrificing the happiness of my life. These ideas perplexed me a long time. I was sometimes

times tempted to abandon all, and not to be concerned at what the world might say provided I was happy. I was immediately ashamed of these thoughts, so unworthy of my birth and my profession ; and I passed all the night in these agitations.

I returned next morning, as I used to do, to Madam de Selve's. I found her more afflicted, and more cast down than the evening before. I should have got over my own grief, but I was not able to support her's. I forgot all those sentiments of glory which had sustained me till then : they appeared to me to be barbarous, and I resolved to sacrifice them to the tranquility of Madam de Selve. I threw myself at her feet : I told her, I could not stand out against the force of her tears ; that to put a stop to them, I was going to abandon the service, being too happy to live only for her. I made no doubt, that this discourse would assuage her grief, and re-

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establish the tranquility of her mind. Madam de Selve looked at me some time, without saying any thing, and embracing me all of a sudden with transport, which she had never done before : I am sensible, said she, how much it must cost you, to make the sacrifice you offer me ; but I should be unworthy of it, if I was capable of accepting it. Yes, added she, I am too well satisfied with the power that love has given one over you ; I restore you to your glory, I restore you to your desire, and that is to restore you to yourself. I was so transported with admiration, that I believe out of gratitude I should have made her that sacrifice, which I had only offered her out of compassion, for the grief that I saw her in ; I assured her, she was absolute mistress of my lot and my conduct, and that I could not have a better guide, than a person of that justness in her way of thinking, and of so esteemable a character.

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From that moment Madam de Selve appeared to be more calm and easy, or rather I perceived that she dissimulated her agitation, that she might not excite mine. She told me, that a man of my birth had no other choice to make but that of arms; that it was the only profession, as it had been the origin of the French nobility, and that a woman who would dare to inspire her lover with any other thoughts, was only fit to serve his looser pleasures, not to occupy his heart. In short, when my duty came in question, the tender Madam de Selve never opposed it. I found her always the surest friend. How cruel soever absence must be to lovers, I was charmed with her generous sentiments: they made my passion for her the stronger. Madam de Selve, as I said, had embraced me in her first transport: this favour encouraged me to ask others; and though I presumed to take no liberties with her but such as she allowed me, I fancied that shame, rather than any

other motive, hindered her from yielding to my warmest desires. I then pressed her to compleat my happiness; but she conjured me to require nothing of her contrary to her duty; she said that her heart, which I was sure of, ought to satisfy me, and that I was so dear to her, she would not risk the losing of me. I saw that my solicitations afflicted her; I insisted no more that day; and I left her after having received all the assurances of the most tender love.

The time I had left me before my going to the army was too precious, not to be dedicated intirely to Madam de Selve. I spent every day with her. Our conversation was all about our loves; the rigour of our duty, and the necessity there was of obeying it. I found in Madam de Selve always the same tenderness and the same charms: But so far was I from being able to continue in the same reserve which she
required

required of me, that my desires were more and more inflamed. I began again to press her; I swore to her my heart was unalterably attached to her; that she was become necessary not only to the happiness of my life, but to my very existence also, and that therefore she ought not to be afraid of my inconstancy. She then put me in mind of the respect I ought to have for her; but my love was too violent to be restrained. I prayed; I pressed; I joined endeavours to the vivacity of solicitations and oaths; I embraced her: she was moved; she sighed; I found no more but a weak resistance, and I became the happiest of men. It is impossible to conceive my happiness, without having had the same desires. Though I had passed my life with women, this pleasure was new to me: it is love only that raises the value of it. I did not find that humbling disgust of common lovers succeed the fire of my desires, my soul was always enjoying.

Attached by love, and fixed by pleasure, I thought Madam de Selve still more charming. I oppressed her with kisses : her mouth, her eyes, her whole person was the object of my caresses, and the source of my transports. A pleasurable drunkenness was diffused over all my senses. Scarce was she calmed, when I observed that she durst not look at me, and she even shed tears. Her trouble passed into my soul ; I was made to have the same sentiments with her. I considered myself as a criminal. I was afraid I had become odious to her, I conjured her not to hate me. Alas ! she said, is it in my power to hate you ? But I find that I shall lose you ! Ah ! can I pardon myself ? I omitted nothing to dissipate her fears, which I thought injurious to me ; I assured her of unchangeable constancy. I swore to her, that as soon as she would give me her hand, we should secure by the seal of the law and public faith, those ties which love had made. Fond caresses, accompanied

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my vows. Madam de Selve calmed herself, and embracing me tenderly, she said, she would never reproach herself for having sacrificed all to my desires, so long as she should be sure of my heart, whose fidelity or inconstancy would make her, either the most happy, or the most unfortunate of women. My oaths, my transports, and our mutual love dissipated all her fears. I obtained my pardon, and we sealed it with the same caresses which a little before had made me a criminal, and which become equally innocent and delicious, when they pass between two, who are truly in love with one another. The happy state of satisfied desires returns of itself. I passed some days with Madam de Selve in pleasures inexpressible. I was obliged to go at last, and the more happy we were, so much the more cruel was our separation.

The noise and bustle of war served only to make the peace more certain,
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and the campaign we made was only the campaign of peace-making.

I returned to Paris more amorous than when I left it, and with the resolution to hasten my marriage with Madam de Selve. Attached by love, pleasure, and gratitude, I imagined these were ties to unite me yet more closely with her. We saw one another again with such transports, as cannot be comprehended but by those who have had the like experience. I passed a year in the height of transport; love was the source of it, and pleasure added to our love. I saw none but Madam de Selve; I was all for her, and without her every thing was strange to me. Why should so delicious a state ever have an end? It is not that I would wish to be for ever young; youth, of itself, is often the occasion of inconstancy. I don't aspire at changing the condition of human nature; but our hearts ought to be

be more perfect. The enjoyments of the soul ought to be eternal.

The principles of my happiness were always the same, and yet it was altered by being grown familiar. The pleasures which formerly hurried me on with such violence became indifferent to me, and by degrees quite insipid, and at last palled my senses.

But this disgust lasted not long; a woman of Madam de Selve's character will always have a tie upon our reason, and when we reflect that we ought to love, we cannot despise; but my former pleasures with other women which had seemed so distasteful to me in the beginning of my amour for this lady, I thought I might again indulge; I imagined that to converse with others would keep up my passion for her from languishing, and variety quicken my inclination for her, who was most worthy of it, by shewing me the difference between
her

her and all who might rival her. To this end, therefore, my former acquaintance being dispersed, I sought for new, and could not be long without finding them; as Paris is full of society, one needs not seek for company, it's sufficient not to shun it. I now was not so assiduous in going to Madam de Selve, that is, I went not every day, or at least I made not so long visits, which supposes, that I began to think them long. The taste which I had for the play-houses, and which Madam de Selve had suspended, because she went seldom to them, and that I could not live but where she was, revived with me, and I returned to the diversion I found ordinarily there, with some of my friends who carried me along with them.

The first time that I failed to return to Madam de Selve's house, where I so long had been accustomed to sup, she was extremely troubled, she was afraid some accident had befallen me. She
sent

sent next morning to know how I was, on which I went immediately to see her; she made some tender complaints. I did not think I deserved them, nevertheless I was a little confused and ashamed. There must be a certain judge within us of greater penetration than inclination, and which absolves or condemns us with the most enlightened equity.

Some days after I was again engaged at an entertainment. The first reproaches which Madam de Selve had made me, troubled me a little. When I accosted her, I was afraid of new complaints, as I had a-new offended; but she made none, and I was glad on it. Nevertheless I was frequently absent, but I had always a remorse when I did not go to sup with her, and one never wrongs a valuable woman without deserving it, and if he examines himself strictly, he'll find out the faulty cause. Madam de Selve was almost always
alone;

alone; as I had told her once that I found nothing so hateful as those visits which hindered lovers from caressing and opening their hearts to one another, she had insensibly got rid of those few whom she saw before she knew me. I ought therefore to have shared with her in the solitude which she had reduced herself to, only to please me. After the first reproaches which Madam de Selve made me with great softness, she never made me any more; but I observed that she was not free and easy in her mind, and was somewhat melancholy in her humour. I sometimes asked her the reason of it, she answered me always, that she had no reason; and when I insisted, by asking, if she had any cause to complain of me, she assured me that she was perfectly content, and made me all the caresses which she could to undeceive me. Being in this manner assured, or rather deceiving myself upon the score of my innocence, I gave myself up more and more to rambling.

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In the mean time I was uneasy to see Madam de Selve more serious with me, without being less affectionate. I reproached myself, I was afflicted, and though she constrained me in nothing I found myself restrained, because I had remorses ; but as I continued to deserve them, I soon forgot them, and Madam de Selve's easiness, or rather her goodness contributed to it. When I had been some days without seeing her, and would have excused myself, she saved me the trouble, and told me, she was glad that I amused myself ; that a man could not remain in a continual solitude, which suited better with the condition of a woman ; and that howsoever great her desire was to be always with me, my will and pleasure satisfied and comforted her. These sentiments were so much the more agreeable, as they left me at my ease and liberty. Madam de Selve became more dear to me for that very reason. We naturally love those who don't upbraid us with our

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faults,

faults, but much more those who excuse them. Whatever complaisance she had for my inclinations, I could not but take notice of the pleasure which my presence gave her. I resolved now and then to pass some days with her, and to do out of gratitude, what I formerly did from the greatest ardour of love, and which it would have been impossible for me not to do. The time which we allot to our duty, seems always very long. I grew weary of it, in spite of my resolution. Madam de Selve discovered it before I was sensible of it myself. She did not desire me to leave her, and look out for pleasures more gay and amusing, but she furnished me with pretences, which, perhaps, I should not have thought of, though I wished for them. 'Twas then that I wondered how she could be so blind with regard to my faults, with so much penetration at the same time to prevent my desires.

Madam

Madam de Selve was the only object of my love, she had no rival. I believed that my heart would always be just, and that our commerce would become as chearful as ever, if she would live in society. I proposed it to her, she agreed to it; she had never any will but mine. We lived some time in this way, and I found it more agreeable. Lovers who have spent the first fire of their passion, love to cut short a tedious tale, such as a private conversation between themselves affords. However, I was yet faithful, and if my pleasures were not quite so lively with her as formerly, at least I did not desire any other.

This tranquillity was not long; I became at last inconstant. Some women have no other design by their raileries but to incite you to love them, and sometimes it's nothing but a habit of coquetry. There are others who would be quite indifferent about the conquest,

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if it was not for a certain pleasure they have to robb a mistress of her lover, and make him break with her. I found one of them of this character, and unhappily for me I was pleased with her. My amour with Madam de Selve was known. An intrigue may be a secret for a while, but is always some how or other discovered. Madam de Darsigny was resolved to become the rival of Madam de Selve, and she succeeded but too well.

She was a pretty little figure to please the fancy, lively, giddy, speaking before she thought, and never reflecting. Her youth, joined to a habit of pleasure and coquetry, was to her instead of wit, and frequently supplied her want of knowing the world. To be sure I did not prefer her to Madam de Selve, to whom she was every way inferior; nothing but novelty could recommend her to me. My heart was always steadfast to Madam de Selve, but I resolved to
amuse

amuse myself with Madam de Darfigny. She had merit for nothing else, and seemed to require no more.

She had a rich man to her husband, who kept a good house, and did not trouble himself about the conduct of his wife, provided she brought good company to him. These sort of houses never want company, good or bad. I was carried there by one of my friends, who had no other title to introduce me, but that he had been brought there himself, about a week before. I supped several times there. The vivacity of Madam de Darfigny amused me: I thought her fit to divert and refresh me, considering the serious manner I lived in with Madam de Selve. True love and real happiness are better suited to the character of Madam de Selve; but a simple intrigue wants to have more gaiety.

The little Madam de Darfigny, who had heard of my passion for Madam de Selve, spoke to me of her, as the women speak of one another, that is to say, she extolled her person, and her good sense; with all the Buts and Ifs which are usual on the like occasions. I answered to it as I ought to have done. I did justice to Madam de Selve, and I added, that there never had been any thing between her and me but a tie of friendship; which was to say as much, as that I might have another. This conversation served me instead of a declaration; without love I offered my heart to Madam de Darfigny, and she accepted it in the same way.

She thought to have made me forget Madam de Selve; but I knew that I only supplied the place of another, whose reign was at an end. I was immediately known in the society for the favourite lover, that is to say for the master of the house;

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I enjoyed all the prerogatives of my new dignity, of which a great deal of trouble makes a part. I could, it's true, bring whom I pleased to Madam de Darigny's house; but then I must also be at the head of all the parties, which were not always so amusing as noisy.

It was not possible for me to be hurried on by this torrent, and at the same time be decently assiduous in my visits to Madam de Selve. I was sorry for it. I did not love her with the same vivacity I had done; but, in short, I loved none but her: she was more necessary to my heart than Madam de Darigny was to my looser moments. It is the most troublesome case an honest man can be involved in, that he cannot make his heart and his conduct agree. My trouble increased when I was with Madam de Selve; I found her sometimes under such discouragement as pierced me to the heart. She received my caresses, but
gave

gave me none. I did not observe that her affection for me was cooled or diminished ; but she seemed to be afraid of being troublesome to me. When I left her, her image followed me, and embittered all my pleasure. I was a hundred times upon the point of returning to her, never to leave her any more. My state with her might have been languishing ; but it would have been without remorse. What troubled me most was, the fear I was in lest Madam de Selve should come to the knowledge of my intrigue with Madam de Darigny, whom I thought I loved : pleasure imitates love a little.

I did justice however to them both ; my mind was more just than my heart. I amused myself with Madam de Darigny ; but I had no confidence in her : But as to Madam de Selve, whatever happened with regard to my interest and estate, good or bad, I went that moment and told her, and took her advice,

vice. I found her always the same affectionate prudent person, of good solid sense and understanding. I was not worthy of her. On these occasions my love revived ; but it soon cooled and sunk down into weariness and languishing. The fire of love, if once it's extinguished, flames no more. I therefore believed, that to calm the disgust of my mind I ought to visit Madam de Selve very seldom, and become the more criminal, that I might by so doing stifle my remorse. So my visits, which were made at great intervals, were a kind of duty which I performed with constraint.

In the mean time Madam de Selve was in a condition and disposed to accept of my hand ; but I had no more the inclination to offer it. I made no doubt that she would put me in mind of my promise, upon which her honour depended, and I was afraid of the moment : but she never spoke to me of it ;
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she expected, no doubt, that I should make the proposal. I took advantage of her delicacy, and shewed I had none myself; I waved every thing that might make her recall the thought on it. Madam de Selve did not make me the least reproach for my estrangement.

On the other hand, Madam de Darsigny, more vain than jealous, since there was no real love between her and me, pretended that she began to suspect my friendship with Madam de Selve; she required of me not to see her, and I was so base as to promise it. I was in a most cruel situation. The happiness or misery, of our life depends, as to appearance, more upon those little frivolous concerns, than upon things of the greatest importance. More sincerity and equity had saved me a great deal of trouble.

This was my situation, when one of my relations, who for the most part lived

lived in the country at a small distance from Paris, came to solicit an affair which he had at court. I was of use to him, and brought it to bear to his satisfaction. Before he returned to the country, he desired I would come such a day and sup with him: I went. He told me, as I entered with a chearful air, that he had taken care to provide me agreeable company, and that when he assembled people, it was his great attention to match them so as he might please them. He retailed to me on this subject, a great many maxims and rules of conduct in living with the world, and was insisting upon his experience and prudence in those matters, when I saw Madam de Darigny enter. I was charmed with it, and began to think, that my friend, considered as a country gentleman, was delicate enough in his attention and sorting of company; but this pleasure lasted not long, for in a moment we were told that Madam de Selve was come. The cursed rustic had informed

formed himself of the ladies I saw most frequently, and had not failed to invite them; and as the women who live in the world, are well enough known at Paris to accept of a supper, he had assembled eight or ten of them. I was never more perplexed in my life. I could not avoid making my addresses to Madam de Selve and Madam de Darsigny, suitably to the conversation I had with each of them in private. Madam de Selve's superior rank to that of her rival, intitled her and authorised me to pay her all the honours of preference; but independent of the regard due to rank, that which comes from the heart has a distinguishing character, and both of them had a right to pretend to it. Moreover, the little Madam de Darsigny believed that love ought to regulate ranks, and that with regard to me she ought to carry it in spite of custom, and flattered herself with a triumph before the eyes of her rival. I thought the weak capacity of this woman might have
been

been of use to me, and that she would have accepted of my excuse for my attentions to Madam de Selve, both upon the account of her rank, and the friendship also which was between us : but I was mistaken, all women have spirit on these occasions, and upon such subjects; vanity enlightens them, and which is worse, makes them unjust. The greatest difficulty I had, was to conceal from Madam de Selve my intrigue with Madam de Darigny. I ought not naturally to have had so great a familiarity with a woman whom I never had said I knew. It must be allowed, the situation was puzzling; men of intrigue will better understand it than others.

I was set at table between the two rivals. Madam de Darigny made all imaginary inticements and railleries. She took unusual liberties, and which no reasonable woman would venture on. Madam de Selve did not so much as seem to take notice of it. I was charm-

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ed at it, and the little Darfigny offended, which only made her the more giddy. I was in torment, when, to complete my punishment, the master of the house remembered me aloud of a flight promise I had made him, to go see him at his country house; and in the mean time invited all at table to be of the party, being extremely desirous to re-assemble so good a company at his house. He addressed himself first to Madam de Selve, who did not absolutely refuse, waiting, no doubt, my answer. Madam de Darfigny made it for me, and approved of the proposal. The journey was fixed for the third day, and I went the next to Madam de Selve, very much out of countenance. I could not understand her blindness. It was so great, I could not but suspect it. I considered it as an effect of her prudence, and I doubted not, that she had reserved for a particular explication, that which she had dissembled in public.

I found

I found not the least change in the reception she gave me. I thought I had perfectly deceived her, and that she had no suspicion at all of Madam de Darigny. I was afraid of the party we were to make in the country, but now I took courage again. I reckoned that after the good luck I had to deceive her during supper, it would be as easy for me to do it in the country, and I entreated her to go there. She made difficulties, which I wondered at, but at last she consented, and we went next day. I went by myself, to shun being with one or other of those two rivals.

The country entertainment passed as the former supper had done. At first I was constrained ; Madam de Selve seemed very serious ; and Madam de Darigny very giddy. Madam de Selve's tranquillity made me secure. I believed her so blind, that there was no necessity of observing measures. Pleasure triumphed over esteem, and I gave in to all the

humours of Madam de Darfigny. Nor did she seem to take any more notice of Madam de Selve. When I recollected my past conduct, I understood of what consequence it was to an honest man to be attentive to the object of his attachment, and not to neglect her. Our virtues and our vices depend on it, with this difference, that we content ourselves sometimes with the esteem for virtue, while we give in to all kind of follies.

I neglected Madam de Selve most unaccountably, when on the other hand she was the object of the respect and attention of all the rest of the company. Madam de Darfigny and I were so little upon our guard, that the most stupid spectator might have understood our secret intelligence. But at last it broke out before her, from whom it concerned me most to conceal it.

Madam

Madam Darsigny and I had retired to a part of the wood the least frequented, where we were fooling with that liberty which was not fit for witnesses. The place, the opportunity, and inclination, seduced us; we took the advantage of it, when Madam de Selve, who had been looking about for a solitary place, was by chance led to that where we were. She found us in a situation, neither to be denied nor justified. She no sooner perceived us, than she retired hastily; but she could not do it so, but we were convinced that nothing had escaped her.

The surprise and trouble this accident put us in, cannot be described. We were for some time immoveable and speechless. I was in despair, to have had for a witness of my infidelity the woman I had wronged, and who had so little deserved it, and whom, I believed I had absolutely deceived till that moment. I was tortured at heart. Ma-

dam de Darfigny, who did not penetrate to the depth of my soul, and who could imagine that a man, who, for ordinary, was guided by pleasure and vanity, could be under any concern for himself, believed that the whole weight of the misfortune fell upon her only. She was surprized by a woman whom she looked upon as an offended rival; besides she knew her sex, she judged of them by herself, and understood, that without being a rival, a woman knew what use to make of such a discovery. She was disconsolate, and said, she would go for Paris immediately without daring to return to the castle.

I used all means possible to pacify her, though I greatly wanted the like assistance myself. I encouraged her, and assured her she had nothing to fear from Madam de Selve, who was a woman of extraordinary discretion and probity. I was afraid of her resentment against myself; but I was sure of her discretion.

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I persuaded Madam de Darsigny that our going off in that manner would occasion bad interpretations, and thinking more than Madam de Selve could say of the matter.

We returned to the castle with the fear and confusion of two criminals. I should have appeared with an air of triumph, perhaps, if Madam de Selve had not so surprized us, as made my heart to tremble. It was already late; the company were reassembled, and ready to go to the table; Madam de Darsigny said she was indisposed, and that she wanted a little rest. The master of the house thought it was a piece of politeness to press her to go to the table, and though she could have wished to be alone, as fear and trouble were the source of her actions, at that time had not the courage to refuse. Madam de Selve, who knew the cause of Madam de Darsigny's indisposition, did all she could to encourage her. She civilly prevented

ed her in every thing Madam de Darigny could desire to make her easy, and shewed her the utmost care and attention. Nothing but the excess of her concern for Madam de Darigny could discover and assure me of the motive of it, which was a generous compassion. All this escaped Madam de Darigny; she had neither a heart so delicate, nor a spirit of that penetration to discover the principles of a goodness so uncommon. Madam de Darigny recovered herself, and believed her rival had not seen nothing, for she supposed a woman could not have had such an advantage, and not have made use of it. Her gaiety returned with her health, and before supper was over she was as brisk and giddy as ever she had been. Madam de Selve was glad that Madam de Darigny mistook the matter.

I was of another judgment. Every thing that bore the stamp of virtue, made me know Madam de Selve. She
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was more pleased with her having recovered Madam de Darfigny, than she could have been by her acknowledgments, which could not have been made but at the expence of her happiness.

I durst not look at Madam de Selve, and I was yet more afraid to be with her alone. I would not undeceive Madam de Darfigny of the mistake she was in; but I burned with impatience to be at Paris, to which we returned the next day.

The conduct of Madam de Selve on this occasion opened my eyes. I understood, that though she had no proof of my infidelity before, she had greatly suspected it. I saw plainly the reason of her trouble, and of her reserve with me, but I could not conceive what could have hindered her from breaking with me. I believed that she wished and waited till she had conviction, and therefore I concluded that she would never
see

see me again, but to give me my dismissal. It made me mad to think of it. It is true, I had not that warmth, that ardency of passion for Madam de Selve which rendered any other object troublesome to me, but I did not love her the less. My love becoming more quiet, had united itself with the most tender friendship. Inconstancy, which was more the fault of my nature than of my heart, and the habit of intriguing in which I had lived, made me always hunt after variety; but I loved Madam de Selve only, and I felt that she was absolutely necessary to the happiness of my life. I could not think without trembling, that she was going to discharge me from seeing her for ever.

I would have sacrificed Madam de Darfigny, and all the women of the world, to obtain my pardon. I resolved to go see Madam de Selve, to confess to her my faults, and to endeavour to encline and soften her; with these thoughts

thoughts of being but too happy in accepting of all the conditions it should please her to lay me under.

I went to her accompanied with fear, and I accosted her trembling. She received me with a serious air, but mixed with no indignation; mean time, I durst not open my mouth. At length, after a thousand struggles within me, I told her I came to throw myself at her feet as a guilty person to ask her pardon, of which I knew I was most unworthy. Madam de Selve pitied my confusion; she did not suffer me to continue a discourse, which she believed cost me very dear.

I see, she said, that you begin to be sensible of your wrongs, but it may be you don't reproach yourself with all those you have done, and which have touched me most sensibly. You know that I have sacrificed my all to you; don't believe that the senses have seduced me;
not

not but that I have shared of your pleasures, but love only determined me. I never have had any other desire but to make you happy. It was not to your oaths that I surrendered myself: they engaged for your probity; but they are not the tie of hearts, and I was only sure of my own. You were not for all that the less obliged to consider them as sacred, and to be observed; nevertheless, I have seen how much you have been afraid, lest I should recall the idea of them to your remembrance, but I did not do it. I might have, perhaps, exposed you to the worst of crimes, that of perjury, by refusing me your hand; or if honour had made you give it, I should only have been the more unfortunate. Your engagements would have only aggravated your guilt, and I should have become the object of your hatred.

At this word I interrupted Madam de Selve; I fell at her feet, I professed to her the most true and sincere repentance.

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I conjured her to accept of my hand,
and I swore fidelity to her for ever.

It's no more time now, said she, I believe your offers and protestations sincere at this moment ; but you promise more than you are able to perform. You have been unfaithful to me ; you would be so again. It is possible it might not be ; but it's without example, that one is unjust only for once. There has been a time when I could flatter myself with your constancy ; you have been addicted to gallantry and intrigues, without having loved really. Love might have fixed you, I had dared to hope it ; since that could not reclaim you, nothing can. You might observe decencies ; but bare regard does not supply the place of love. I have not observed your coldness towards me without the most bitter griefs. I was sensible, before you was, of the first moment of your inconstancy : a lover is very sharp-sighted. I hid my trouble from you as much as I could. I

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dissembled my displeasure; complaints and reproaches reclaim no body. I should have made you uneasy to no purpose: you were reserved with me, and if I had appeared to be more penetrating, I should have only obliged you to have recourse to falshood, in order to deceive me. I see that constancy is not in the power of men, and their education makes infidelity appear no crime to them. Their attachment depends upon the vivacity of their desires. When the enjoyment and the confidence of a woman has extinguished them, it is not esteem, it is not even love that revives them, it is the novelty of an other object. Moreover, prejudice encourages them to infidelity. Their honour is not hurt, their vanity flatters them, and use authorises them.

If any thing can comfort me, it is to see that I have preserved your esteem, and I dare say your love, or at least all the tenderneſs that your heart is as yet

yet capable of. You have been, perhaps, not so unfaithful to me, as you could have wished ; for in short, it is always, a cruel thing to be fighting with one's own heart, and you have had remorsees from which you would have been free, if you had ceased to love me. I only possess your heart ; I have done nothing to lose it ; and these women whom you can prefer to me in your pleasures, will not, it may be, be thought worthy of them, or, at least, you will not long love them.

Judge you, if it be convenient for me to accept of your hand, I who cannot be happy, if I don't find in my husband both a lover and a friend. The last title pleases me best. I would not, I ought not, and I cannot pretend to the other. I have had reason enough to study you, and time to know you. Your heart is good and faithful, but your inclinations are light and wavering, and variety your pleasure. Pursue there-

fore your inclinations ; have mistresses ; I shall be satisfied to remain your friend. It is so rare that friendship survives or succeeds to love, that while others partake of your pleasures, I shall enjoy your confidence. I shall have no rival in my sentiments, and I have too much delicacy and pride to share you with any whosoever. As long as I had any hopes of reclaiming you, I appeared blind, and to understand nothing of your alienation. The persuasion you had that you was innocent in my eyes, left you the liberty of being more guilty. Such a conduct on my part would no longer impose upon you, and would only serve to debase me.

I was so struck with the wisdom of Madam de Selve's discourse, that all my love for her revived. I had no mind to sacrifice Madam de Darigny to her, but as a condition of our reconciliation, and at that moment I would have sacrificed the universe to her. I

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conjured her to return to her first sentiments for me, and to accept of my hand for the pledge of my faith. All my protestations were in vain. I found Madam de Selve equally tender in her friendship, and steadfast in her resolution. I lived in this way with her two months closely, without leaving her, without seeing any woman, and without gaining any thing by my perseverance.

At length despairing to persuade her, and not daring to condemn her, I left off pressing her. I submitted to her orders, and took again to my old acquaintances. Madam de Selve, who observed it, was the first to speak to me of it; and I assured her, that as soon as she would, I would sacrifice all to return to her. I saw her as often as ever, because her presence did not straiten me, and was at no pains to conceal my intrigues and remorses from her.

She spoke to me of my mistresses, she described them to me, and gave me lessons for my conduct. I admired always the justness of her judgment. I was not guilty of any infidelity, if I may make use of that term, in the singular situation I lived in with Madam de Selve, which did make me discover new beauties and charms in her heart and mind, and attached me to her more and more.

The conversation between Madam de Selve and me was certainly of a new kind. I was sometimes afraid it would make her forego the sentiments she had sworn to preserve for me, and I should have been in the greatest perplexity imaginable about it; her heart was yet more precious to me than all my pleasures.

The indulgence, said I to her, which you have for all my transient intrigues,
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cannot proceed but from your indifference. It is, without doubt, very extravagant that I should be jealous; but I cannot help having a little jealousy, when I see you have so little on it. If you believed me to be innocent, would you not believe yourself to be very guilty, if you should give ear to another lover? Madam de Selve could not forbear laughing at my jealousy.

Your conduct, she answered, ought not to give me any trouble or suspicion, if I had complaisance for any other but for you; but you may rest assured upon that head. Nothing equalled my happiness when I was the only object of your desires; but I still chuse rather to preserve your heart by indulgence, than to alienate it by severity, which would be of the worst consequence to myself. If I followed your example, you could not reasonably blame me. Nature has given no other rights to men, than to women;

women; but you would be doubly unjust, to condemn in me that which you pardon in yourself. But, what ought chiefly to make you easy in this matter, is, that women are endued with greater tenderness and cordial affection than men, and their desires are not so violent. The common reproaches thrown out against women are unjust in themselves, and are owing rather to men without probity, and who have been maltraited by women, than to those lovers who have received the favours due to true love. As for me, I confess, I am very little affected or moved with the pleasures of the senses; without real love I should never have known them: I might add, that the senses crave no more, than what people are accustomed to give them; and that men themselves are often more employed in provoking, than satisfying them. Wherefore you may rest assured of my
fidelity,

fidelity, though you have no right, no reason to require it. You are not so happy as I am, and I have more pleasure in loving you, than you can have in your inconstancy.

My admiration and respect for Madam de Selve increased every day. Her fine sentiments made me ashamed of my own, but did not amend me. It was not reason which could reclaim and cure me of my errors. It was reserved for me, to be put out of conceit with women, by women themselves. A little time after, I found nothing inticing in their company; neither their figure, nor their graces, nor their character, nor even their faults, were any thing new to me. I could not find one mistress, who did not resemble some of those I had before. The whole sex was to me but as one woman, for whom I had no longer any love or inclination. But, which was singular, I discovered

covered new charms in Madam de Selve every day, her figure surpassed all that I had ever seen; I did not conceive how I could have preferred any body to her. Acquaintance and familiarity, which generally diminish the value of beauty, added to her character, and served the more to attach me. Besides, my inconstancy for Madam de Selve gave her occasion to shew me virtues which were more than female, and which shone out with brighter lustre through my injustice.

Madam de Selve regained all the rights she had to my heart. I had no more those tumultuous movements, which at first carried and attached me to her with violence, and which afterwards were the source of my errors; I was no more hurried on by the impetuous rage of the senses. A sentiment more tender, more peaceable, and more rational filled my soul, and diffused a serenity

nity and calm, which augmented my happiness, by leaving me the liberty of perceiving it.

I did not now neglect seeing Madam de Selve. My visits, which I had suspended for some time, whilst I thought to conceal my infidelities from her, became more frequent, as soon as they were not constrained. I had no pleasure but in her. Insensibly, and without perceiving it distinctly, a loathsome disgust seized upon me, and detached me from the world; those societies, I mean, and intrigues, which dissolute inclinations had made me seek after.

It was Madam de Selve who first made me observe it. I agreed with her, and I laid hold of the opportunity to press her again to receive my hand. I am content to do it, she said, this very day. I have now no reason to refuse it. I am no more afraid to lose you; but
you

you must own it's very singular, that in order to have a husband, I have been obliged to wait till he had no more love; yet its what makes me sure of your heart. It's not my lover whom I marry; it's a friend with whom I unite, and whose tenderness and esteem are more dear to me, than all the transports of blind love.

As our marriage wanted no preparations but our consent, it was very soon concluded. It was not the pleasures of love that was our motive, a more noble and tender sentiment reigned in my heart. I was charmed to have assured to myself the possession of all that I held most dear in the world, and to be sure of passing my life with Madam de Selve, who had also the same sentiments. The world, far from being necessary to our happiness, could only be troublesome to us. I proposed to Madam de Selve to go pass some time

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at my country seat, she embraced the proposal with great joy. She told me, she desired nothing any where but myself, and that she would always prefer the place where she might enjoy me with the greatest tranquility. It is now a year since we left Paris, and we have not the least desire to return to it. Ah! what should we do there? The world is of no use to our happiness, and perhaps would only make the manner in which we live the subject of their jest and ridicule. I find the whole universe with my wife, who is my friend. She is devoted to my heart, and desires nothing else but to pass her life with me. We live, hope, and fear but for each other.

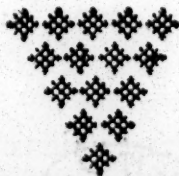
We enjoy that union of hearts, which is both the fruit and the principle of virtue. That which attaches me most to my wife, is, that I owe to her this precious virtue, and doubtless, she che-

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rishes me as her own work. I live content, since I am persuaded, that the state that I enjoy is the most happy that an honest man can aspire to in this life.

The End of the second and last Volume.



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